

In This Issue

Conservatives Take a New Tack on Campus

Are the Great Books “Conservative” Reading?

Dear Mr. Rufer,

We will be coming out with news about our Pledge Campaign in the next weeks - I'll keep you updated. We've been furiously busy all summer, preparing documents and making plans.

Please keep a look-out for more frequent, shorter messages from us, and a new blog on education. We're going to be seeking your opinions in our efforts to develop the College.

In the meantime, I thought you would be interested in some new developments in Higher Education concerning the Great Books.

Regards,

Masha



Conservatives Take a New Tack on Campus

The New York Times ran an article September 22nd, "[Conservatives Try New Tack On Campuses](#)," which reports on various new programs to teach the Classics around the country.

Most have been organized and funded by organizations considered conservative by the mainstream press. (There are some interesting related links at the bottom of the first page of this article, to news about the number of conservatives on-campus, an often-debated point.)

Many academics and intellectuals are suspicious of the Classics as dead-white-male and Western Civilization-biased.

However, the following letter summarizes our views on the use of the Great Books:

"September 29, 2008

Letter

Great Books Are Liberating

To the Editor:

Re "Conservatives Try New Tack on Campuses" (front page, Sept. 22):

Several conservative foundations may have chosen to support the great books programs that are making a welcome comeback on American campuses.

But it would be a mistake to infer that these programs have a built-in conservative bias. Any serious program of this kind will include books with a liberal - even revolutionary - outlook, along with those that endorse a more conservative, or religiously inspired, perspective.

The point of reading these books is not to convey any particular orthodoxy, but to help students acquire the independence of judgment that personal maturity and political responsibility require.

This is what liberal education means - not liberal in the political sense, but liberating.

Students who do not have a chance to study the greatest works of Western civilization in a disciplined way are deprived of their inheritance. The defense and betterment of our civilization, with all its achievements and challenges, will soon be in their hands.

They need to know what they have been given to protect and improve.

Anthony T. Kronman
New Haven, Sept. 22, 2008
The writer is a professor at Yale Law School."

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